AUM

The Supreme Universal Spirit is One, simple and indivisible; being all, pervading all, sustaining all, the good, the bad and the ignorant alike.

I am the origin of all. From me all proceeds. For those who are constantly devoted, dead in me, do I, on account of my compassion, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance, by the brilliant lamp of spiritual knowledge.—*Bagavad-Gita.*

THE PATH.

VOL. I. SEPTEMBER, 1886. No. 6.

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this magazine, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

Where any article, or statement, has the author's name attached, he alone is responsible, and for those which are unsigned, the Editor will be accountable.

THEOSOPHIC MORALS.

Some remarks professedly concerned with "The Higher Life," appearing in "THE PATH" for July, over the *nom de plume* of *Murdhna Joti*, strike me as presenting the readers with so narrow and unwholesome a view of Theosophic principles, that I find myself impelled to point out some of the misconceptions from which they seem to arise. That hard-worked phrase the "Dweller on the Threshold" has been interpreted in many fantastic senses, but surely it has never before been saddled with so ludicrously inappropriate a meaning as in this essay where it is made to stand for love of kindred and love of country. That these ennobling sentiments are what the writer means by "family defects" and "national defects" is apparent from the passage that would be little less than blasphemous in the ears of any real oriental Chela with whom I have ever been acquainted,—in which :—"A Mahatma has, it appears, declared that he has still patriotism. But he has not said nor would say that he has still family attachment. This proves that

he has got out of the defects of the family to which he belongs, while he is only striving to get out of national defects, some of which at any rate cling to him." The reference here is of course to one of the letters quoted by me in the *Occult World*, in which the writer so beautifully shows that the exalted rank in nature to which he has attained, leaves him as free as ever to entertain generous emotions of sympathy with the race to which his latest personality belongs. If he had been dealing with the subject from another point of view he would have equally shown himself to be,—as I have good reason to believe that he is,—animated by still more specific attachments to certain persons of his physical kindred. "Defects" of family and defects of nationality may undoubtedly be reflected in given individuals, and like any other personal failings may in such cases stand in the way of devotion to the Higher Life; but such defects are not those which are convertible terms, according to the extraordinary essay before me, with healthy patriotism and domestic affection. And I can hardly imagine a more grotesquely misleading account of occult progress than that which represents the "beginner" as employed upon first extinguishing his regard for his relations, and going on to teach himself indifference to the land of his birth. If the extravagance of such a doctrine could be enhanced in an essay addressed to Western readers, it would be thus intensified by its author's reference to the "family duties" which must be duly accomplished first before the promising neophyte in the training subsequently prescribed for him is at liberty to enter the "circle of ascetics." A certain haziness clings round his theory as to the nature of these duties, but enough is said to show any reader familiar with India, that the writer's mind is running on the exoteric customs of the Hindu which constitute the local superstitions of the common people,—a designation which applies equally to one caste as to another, for modern Brahmins may be as thoroughly dissociated from the spirit of the esoteric doctrine and as hopelessly saturated with corrupt conventionalities as British churchwardens or the corresponding functionaries in America. Some such fancies derived from exoteric Hindu thinking have clearly inspired the article under notice. In India even exoteric thinking recognizes the existence of Mahatmas and theories concerning the methods by which their condition may be approached, but Theosophic students in Europe and America should be on their guard against supposing that every thing which emanates from an Indian source, must on that account be true occult philosophy.

Especially in India, but in other parts of the world too, in various disguises we continually encounter the fundamental blunder of the mere *fakir* that progress in occult development is to be acquired by simulating some of the external characteristics of a development that has been accomplished. No doubt there are states of immaterial existence to which human

beings may ultimately climb,—at distances of time as immeasureable as those heights themselves, where such relative attributes as those which invest embodied human beings with specific attachments, will be merged in the higher mysteries of nature, which we can talk about already, perhaps, and assign names to, but assuredly cannot yet realize, or even effectually comprehend. But it may be, there is hardly any level even in Adeptship, at which still embodied humanity is ripe to shed such attachments, and the notion of talking about attempting this from the point of view of incipient chelaship is as ludicrous as it would be to talk about pruning a seedling which had just protruded its first green shoot above the ground ; and suggests, in regard to human illustrations, the notion of a beardless youngster, who presents himself to a barber to be shaved. We Theosophists are engaged in an undertaking which makes it very desirable that we should not render ourselves ridiculous ; and though there is no endeavor possible for us which is better entitled to respect than an honest attempt to lead "the Higher Life," we may perhaps more easily bring discredit on our movement by talking nonsense about that grand ideal, than in any other way. We may go further, indeed, than the mere recognition of nobility attaching to the pursuit of the Higher Life. We may grant that no one can truly be said to have assimilated the principles of esoteric teaching unless these have made a sensible impression on his conduct and on the practical attitude he assumes in relation to others and the world at large. But it will be a matter to be determined by each man's temperament, how far he keeps his own personal dealings, so to speak, with the great principles of Theosophy a private transaction between himself and his conscience, or how far he ventures to bring them into relief by devoting himself especially as a Theosophist to the task of preaching exalted morality. I am now of course passing out, on my own account, into the ocean of Theosophic discussion in general, and the sentence just penned has no reference to the article I began by reviewing,—which appears to me to be very far from promulgating any morality or even coherent sense, exalted or otherwise. But on the subject at large a few general remarks at this juncture may perhaps not be inappropriate.

The most exalted morality imaginable is inevitably deduced from the principles of occult science, for by explaining to mankind how it is that they really evolve through successive lives, each depending on the last and on all its predecessors as summed up in the last, the basic motives for good conduct are set out with far greater precision than they can be suggested by the bribes or threats of conventional religion. Such temptations and warnings, as experience has shown, come to be distrusted or no longer feared as the manifestly erroneous conceptions with which they are entangled, become apparent to advancing intelligence. Then, loving the right still, under the influence of an inner intuition they have not learned to interpret properly,

people attempt sometimes to supply the vacant places of their vanished faith, with painful abstract theories of a barren duty, which take their rise in no intelligible sanction and tend to no specific result. For mere morality divorced from religion and justified by no prospects of future existence, it is impossible that the human mind could permanently furnish a nourishing soil. To provide for the gathering emergency the esoteric doctrine is now beginning to shine on the world. In the longer freedom with which it will shine hereafter, no doubt it will do much more even than explain to men the scientific and satisfactory reasons why, right *is* right, why the pursuit of good conduces to happiness and *vice versa.* Already indeed, it is made apparent that the highest degrees of exaltation possible for human beings, can only be attained in connection with a pursuit of good which has a still more subtle motive than the thirst for spiritual happiness—which is animated by that unsurpassably sublime intention (often talked about so glibly, but surely realized so seldom) unselfishness and disinterested zeal for the welfare of others. But even if we do not handle that exalted topic—which sits ill upon the lips of any preachers who do not at all events outshine the average achievements of ordinary good men in the exercise of unselfishness, is there not in what is put forward above in the first purpose of Theosophy a sufficiently exhilarating task to absorb our best energies? To be laying the foundations of the future system of thought which *must* in due time replace —as the guiding rule of men's lives—the earlier and cruder prescriptions of a priestcraft that their widening comprehension of Nature is fast outgrowing,— is not that a sufficiently magnificent task for the Theosophical Society?

Certainly esoteric teaching opens up possibilities before the sight of ardent spiritual aspirants that suggest to some eager hearts the pursuit of an object—which if rightly understood may be more magnificent still, but which, as contemplated in the beginning may often be prompted by a relatively selfish motive,—the personal pursuit of Adeptship. But in its original purpose the welfare of mankind at large and not the enlistment of new recruits in the army of chelaship was as I read its design, the idea of the Theosophical Society. And how was that design to be carried out? This question seems to me to touch a point which it is highly important to keep in view at the present moment. The Theosophical movement did not begin by preaching *de haut en bas* an all but impossible code of ethics. It began by the highly practical course of linking its operations with one of the most growing impulses in the most spiritually minded sections of the Western community. These were *not* the merely good and pious representatives of still surviving, though decaying religious systems; they were not the hopeless however unselfish exponents of a barren philosophy that threw forward no light on the future; they were found mainly among people who in one way or another, and following various false beacons, perhaps, were realizing that discoveries

were possible beyond the barriers that had formerly seemed to set a limit to the range of the human senses. The bold though bewildered pioneers of psychic inquiry were naturally marked out, indeed, to be appealed to first by the esoteric teachers. For them above all was the rudderless condition of modern religions thought a dark and threatening danger. Along the road they had set out to travel they would certainly not stop short. But readers of Theosophic literature will not require to be reminded where the study of occult phenomena un-illuminated by occult morality must ultimately conduct its enthusiasts. The classes referred to were best qualified to receive the new dispensation: and most urgently in need of it. To them therefore the Theosophical propaganda in the beginning was directed, and this is the consideration which will be seen to explain the mystery that has so frequently been discussed in more recent years—the free and so to speak the extravagant display of occult wonders and marvellous phenomena with which the advent of the Theosophical movement was heralded. Its directors as it were, had to put themselves at the head of the psychic movement generally, in order to direct its future course aright, and they could not do this without commanding the attention of persons already largely experienced in psychic investigation.

No doubt the time has now gone by when the policy that thus inaugurated the Theosophical movement is either practicable or desirable. "The age of miracles is past," for us as for mankind at large,—always making allowance for the familiar correction required by the saying that the age for helping on the more general comprehension of those resources of nature with which the "miracles" had to do has not passed, by any means. The interpretation of Nature—the promulgation of truth concerning the "powers latent in Man"—to the end that the world at large may the better understand its own destinies and promote its own healthier development through an immediate future, is still the ample task that lies before the working members of our organization. Again let us say that no one proposes to divorce this from recognition with which it is so intimately blended, of the sublime morality expressed in the phrase—the Brotherhood of Man. But in our zeal for the starry goal in the far distance, it will be discreet, on our part, to avoid the mistake of the Greek philosopher and not to forget the ground at our feet.

A. P. SINNETT.

NOTE.—The admirable letter which we have printed above from the able pen of the author of Esoteric Buddhism is a good instance of the truth that there are many ways of arriving at the same goal, and incidentally it also illustrates how difficult it is for those who look at any subject by the light of their own "ray" to appreciate the view taken of it by one whose mental constitution is different. Both Murdhna Joti and Mr. Sinnett are right from their own

points of view, and as they understand themselves. Both seem to us to be wrong as they probably understand each other. Patriotism and family attachments as understood by Mr. Sinnett are good things, for he characterises them by the adjectives "healthy" "ennobling" "generous." It cannot be supposed from either a critical or casual reading of "The Higher Life" that Murdhna Joti advocates the elimination of any statement to which these terms would apply. But patriotism and family attachments may be narrow, bigoted, and founded upon an ignorance of other countries and other families,and upon an inability to perceive in other nations and persons the very qualities that make us feel warmly toward those we are acquainted with, intensified by a corresponding blindness to faults we have become habituated to and perhaps partake of ourselves. It is the "provincialism" of patriotism which breeds the prejudice in favor of things which are a part of our "larger selves," and which is bad; and this narrowness in the case of family attachment (a different thing from personal affection), makes us fancy that our family geese are more beautiful than our neighbor's swans. It is in this sense, it seems to us, that the family defects in question are held by Murdhna Joti as things to get rid of, and may be said to enter into that practical conception "the Dweller on the Threshold;" and it is in this sense that a Mahatma may be supposed to lose them. As we rise to a higher level we perceive in clearer distinction the lights and shades in our own country and family, and we see also that much the same lights and shades exist elsewhere and everywhere; we lose at the same time the personal prejudice which made lights and shades of a particular tint more agreeable to us than others; and thus we are brought to view all countries and families in their true light and in their real proportions. But the process by which this is accomplished is more of the nature of a levelling up than of a levelling down. The attachment of a villager is at first confined to his village; as his mind expands, his interests extend themselves progressively to the country, the state, and the nation. This last entails an expenditure of "generous feeling" which is exhaustive for most men; but a Mahatma has enough left to stretch out over the whole of humanity. Anything smaller would not be "ennobling" or "generous" in his case.

We cannot agree, however, with Mr. Sinnett, in his criticism of Murdhna Joti's article, as to its presenting a false view of "Theosophic morals." The fact, at which the learned author of the *Occult World* hints, that a certain Mahatma has "specific attachments" to relatives, does not prove that He still has "family defects." Perhaps the writer of "Living the Higher Life" might have been better understood by Mr. Sinnett if he had in his first paper, intimated that while family defects were to be got rid of, the noble qualities of the family, were to be strengthened; but this seems to be plainly inferred, and is actually to be found in the paper, (p. 153, 3d paragraph);

and all through the first paper, it is strenuously insisted, that the only theosophic morality, is that one which compels us to unselfishly perform our duty in our family where we are placed by inevitable Karma.

Not only has a Mahatma said He "still had patriotism," but He has also stated more emphatically, that "in external Buddhism is the road to truth." He cannot therefore agree with Mr. Sinnett in the objection that exoteric Indian thought and religion led to error. In complete knowledge of this second declaration of the Mahatma, we read and printed Murdhna Joti's paper, as we have "Theosophic Morals." We see in the paper criticised high aspiration and excellent precepts.

There are many modes of life; there are lower and higher planes. No man in one short article can write away all possible future misconceptions; both sides must be presented, and they shall be in this Magazine. We need therefore here warn readers, that Mr. Sinnett does not by any means desire them to understand that in saying that the Mahatma quoted has "certain specific attachments," he would convey the impression that such a great Being has to struggle with the limitations of a family, or that he has given up one legitimate set of ties only to assume others similar. Far from that. The nature of the attachment referred to, is quite as undefinable at Mr. Sinnett's hands as it is at those of the readers, and we think it would be wise for the critic to state with clearness what the attachment is, in order that all readers may for themselves be able to judge of the full meaning, extent and connection of Mr. Sinnett's reference, and what use can properly be made of it for comparison or analysis.

The Mahatma studies the Bagavad-Gita in its higher sense, and all through that book the "passionless ascetic" is lauded. What does it mean? Neglect of life and family? Never! But sometimes one gets out of family defects quite naturally. Yet the world says that *Bagavad-Gita* inculcates stony hearted selfishness, even as they carp at *Light on the Path* when it says "the eyes must be incapable of tears; ambition and desires must be killed out." These are hard sayings. Theosophy is full of difficult sayings, just as Jesus of the Christians said his parables were. But Bagavad-Gita is the divine colloquy; and it is asserted that a Mahatma dictated Light on the Path.—[Ed.]

Hermes Trismegistus.

THE FOURTH STATE OF MATTER DESCRIBED IN THE SMARAGDINE TABLET.

That a tablet, now called the Smaragdine, was found there is no doubt. Its discovery is attributed by tradition to an *isarim* or initiate, who it is said, took it from the dead body of Hermes—this could not have been the

Egyptian god Thoth—which was buried at Hebron, in an obscure ditch. The tablet was held between the hands of the corpse. Some authors say that it was of emerald, which I do not believe ; it probably was of green strass or paste, an imitation of emerald, in the manufacture of which the Egyptians excelled. Be it as it may, the contents evidently refer to that subtile body, called by the great scientist Sir William Thompson, "the luminiferous æther,"—to that mysterious, invisible to us, some-thing, in which the matter-atoms float, the *azoth* of the Hermetic philosophers, the *astral light* of the occultists, the *akasa* of the Hindus ; which physical science attempts to grasp, comprehend and sometimes use, under the name of electricity, magnetism, heat, light, etc ; which is experimentally made visible, in one of its forms, by means of Professor Crooke's "radiant matter" and which he terms the fourth state of matter. It permeates all things, going through flesh and blood, and steel and glass, the diamond and sapphire, with the facility of water through a net. A translation of this tablet is :[1]

"It is true without falsehood, certain and very veritable, that that which is below, is as that which is above, and that that which is on high, is as that which is below, so as to perpetuate the miracles of all things.

And as all things have been and come from One, by the mental desire of One, so all things have been produced from that One only by adaptation.

The Sun (Osiris) is thence the father, and the Moon (Isis) the mother. The Air, its womb, carries it thence, and the Earth is its nurse.

Here is the producer of all, the talisman of all the world.

Its force (or potentiality) is entire, if it is changed into the Earth, you separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtile from the gross. Sweetly, but with great energy, it mounts from the Earth to the Heaven, and again descends to the Earth with powerful energy, and receives the potentiality of the superior and inferior things.

You have, by this means, the light (or fire) of the whole universe. And upon account of this, all obscurity itself, with that, will fly entirely thence.

In this is the energy the strongest of all energy, for it vanquishes all subtile things and penetrates all the solid things.

Thus the world was created. From this will be and will go out admirable adaptations, of which the medium is here.

And because of these reasons I am called Hermes Trismegistus, possessing the three divisions of the philosophy of the universe.

It is complete, this that I have said of the operation of the Sun."

The reader must take note, that the fire referred to here, is not the perceptible fire, but the hidden occult fire, which is concealed in all things, and

1 The emerald table is from the collecton commencing with Le Miroirs d' Alquimie de Jean de Mehun, philosophe, tres—excellent. Traduict de Latin en François, A Paris, 1613, pp. 36—39, to which is also attached, the Petit Commentaire de L'Hortulain, philosphe, dict des Jardins maritimes, sur la Table d' Esmerande d' Hermes Trismegiste pp. 42—64.

only becomes evident through a tearing asunder of the atoms. The fire, which we see, is the black fire, the other the unseen, is the white fire. So the ancient Hebrew philosophy says, the Tablets of the Law given to Moses, were written by the Deity with black fire on white fire. It is referred to but concealed in the Maasey B'reshith, the great occult book of which is the Book of Genesis. ISAAC MYER.

A HINDU CHELA'S DIARY.

[*This was begun in the June number.*]

"I have been going over that message I received just after returning from the underground room, about not thinking yet too deeply upon what I saw there, but to let the lessons sink deep into my heart. Can it be true—must it not indeed be true—that we have periods in our development when rest must be taken for the physical brain in order to give it time as a much less comprehensive machine than these English college professors say it is, to assimilate what it has received, while at the same time the real brain—as we might say, the spiritual brain—is carrying on as busily as ever all the trains of thought cut off from the head. Of course this is contrary to this modern science we hear so much about now as about to be introduced into all Asia, but it is perfectly consistent for me.

"To reconsider the situation: I went with Kunâla to this underground place, and there saw and heard most instructive and solemn things. I return to my room, and begin to puzzle over them all, to revolve and re-revolve them in my mind, with a view to clearing all up and finding out what all may mean. But I am interrupted by a note from Kunâla directing me to stop this puzzling, and to let all I saw sink deep into my heart. Every word of his I regard with respect, and consider to hold a meaning, being never used by him with carelessness. So when he says, to let it sink into my 'heart,' in the very same sentence where he refers to my thinking part—the mind—why he must mean to separate my heart from my mind and to give to the heart a larger and greater power.

"Well, I obeyed the injunction, made myself, as far as I could, forget what I saw and what puzzled me and thought of other things. Presently, after a few days while one afternoon thinking over an episode related in the *Vishnu Purana*,[1] I happened to look up at an old house I was passing and stopped to examine a curious device on the porch; as I did this, it seemed as if either the device, or the house, or the circumstance itself, small as it was, opened up at once several avenues of thought about the underground room, made them all clear, showed me the conclusion as vividly as a well demon-

1 An ancient Hindu book full of tales as well as doctrines.—[ED.]

strated and fully illustrated proposition, to my intense delight. Now could I perceive with plainness, that those few days which seemed perhaps wasted because withdrawn from contemplation of that scene and its lessons, had been with great advantage used by the spiritual man in unraveling the tangled skein, while the much praised brain had remained in idleness. All at once the *flash* came and with it knowledge.[1] But I must not depend upon these flashes, I must give the brain and its governor, the material to work with. * * * * * * * *

"Last night just as I was about to go to rest, the voice of Kunâla called me from outside and there I went at once. Looking steadily at me he said: 'we want to see you,' and as he spoke he gradually changed, or disappeared, or was absorbed, into the form of another man with awe-inspiring face and eyes, whose form apparently rose up from the material of Kunâla's body. At the same moment two others stood there also, dressed in the Tibetan costume; and one of them went into my room from which I had emerged. After saluting them reverently, and not knowing their object, I said to the greatest,

"'Have you any orders to give?'

"'If there are any they will be told to you without being asked,' he replied, 'stand still where you are.'

"Then he began to look at me fixedly. I felt a very pleasant sensation as if I was getting out of my body. I cannot tell now what time passed between that and what I am now to put down here. But I saw I was in a peculiar place. It was the upper end of——— at the foot of the——— range. Here was a place where there were only two houses just opposite to each other, and no other sign of habitation; from one of these came out the old faquir I saw at the Durga festival, but how changed, and yet the same: then so old, so repulsive; now so young, so glorious, so beautiful. He smiled upon me benignly and said:

"'Never expect to see any one, but always be ready to answer if they speak to you; it is not wise to peer outside of yourself for the great followers of Vasudeva: look rather within.'

"The very words of the poor faquir!

"He then directed me to follow him.

"After going a short distance, of about half a mile or so, we came to a natural subterranean passage which is under the——— range. The path is very dangerous; the River——— flows underneath in all the fury of pent up waters, and a natural causeway exists upon which you may pass; only one person at a time can go there and one false step seals the fate of the traveller.

1 These *flashes* of thought are not unknown even in the scientific world, as, where in such a moment of lunacy, it was revealed to an English scientist, that there must be iron in the sun; and Edison gets his ideas thus.—[Ed.]

Besides this causeway, there are several valleys to be crossed. After walking a considerable distance through this subterranean passage we came into an open plain in L———K. There stands a large massive building thousands of years old. In front of it is a huge Egyptian Tau. The building rests on seven big pillars each in the form of a pyramid. The entrance gate has a large triangular arch, and inside are various apartments. The building is so large that I think it can easily contain twenty thousand people. Some of the rooms were shown to me.

"This must be the central place for all those belonging to the——— class, to go for initiation and stay the requisite period.

"Then we entered the great hall with my guide in front. He was youthful in form but in his eyes was the glance of ages. * * The grandeur and serenity of this place strikes the heart with awe. In the centre was what we would call an altar, but it must only be the place where focuses all the power, the intention, the knowledge and the influence of the assembly. For the seat, or place, or throne, occupied by the chief——— the highest———has around it an indescribable glory, consisting of an effulgence which seemed to radiate from the one who occupied it. The surroundings of the throne were not gorgeous, nor was the spot itself in any way decorated—all the added magnificence was due altogether to the aura which emanated from Him sitting there. And over his head I thought I saw as I stood there, three golden triangles in the air above—Yes, they were there and seemed to glow with an unearthly brilliance that betokened their inspired origin. But neither they nor the light pervading the place, were produced by any mechanical means. As I looked about me I saw that others had a triangle, some two, and all with that peculiar brilliant light."

[Here again occurs a mass of symbols. It is apparent that just at this spot he desires to jot down the points of the initiation which he wished to remember. And I have to admit that I am not competent to elucidate their meaning. That must be left to our intuitions and possibly future experience in our own case.]

* * * *

"14th day of the new moon. The events of the night in the hall of initiation gave me much concern. Was it a dream? Am I self deluded? Can it be that I imagined all this? Such were the unworthy questions which flew behind each other across my mind for days after. Kunâla does not refer to the subject and I cannot put the question. Nor will I. I am determined, that, come what will, the solution must be reached by me, or given me voluntarily."

"Of what use to me will all the teachings and all the symbols be, if I cannot rise to that plane of penetrating knowledge, by which I shall my-

self, by myself, be able to solve this riddle, and know to discriminate the true from the false and the illusory? If I am unable to cut asunder these questioning doubts, these bonds of ignorance, it is proof that not yet have I risen to the plane situated above these doubts. * * *
Last night after all day chasing through my mental sky, these swift destroyers of stability—mental birds of passage—I lay down upon the bed, and as I did so, into my hearing fell these words:

"'Anxiety is the foe of knowledge; like unto a veil it falls down before the soul's eye; entertain it, and the veil only thicker grows; cast it out, and the sun of truth may dissipate the cloudy veil.'

"Admitting that truth; I determined to prohibit all anxiety. Well I knew that the prohibition issued from the depths of my heart, for that was master's voice, and confidence in his wisdom, the self commanding nature of the words themselves, compelled me to complete reliance on the instruction. No sooner was the resolution formed, than down upon my face fell something which I seized at once in my hand. Lighting a lamp, before me was a note in the well known writing. Opening it, I read:

"'Nilakant. It was no dream. All was real, and more, that by your waking consciousness could not be retained, happened there. Reflect upon it all as reality, and from the slightest circumstance draw whatever lesson, whatever amount of knowledge you can. Never forget that your spiritual progress goes on quite often to yourself unknown. Two out of many hindrances to memory are anxiety and selfishness. Anxiety is a barrier constructed out of harsh and bitter materials. Selfishness is a fiery darkness that will burn up the memory's matrix. Bring then, to bear upon this other memory of yours, the peaceful stillness of contentment and the vivifying rain of benevolence.'"[1] * * * * *

[I leave out here, as well as in other places, mere notes of journeys and various small matters, very probably of no interest.]

"In last month's passage across the hills near V———, I was irresistibly drawn to examine a deserted building, which I at first took for a grain holder, or something like that. It was of stone, square, with no openings, no windows, no door. From what could be seen outside, it might have been the ruins of a strong, stone foundation for some old building, gateway or tower. Kunâla stood not far off and looked over it, and later on he asked me

1. The careful student will remember that Jacob Bœhme speaks of the "harsh and bitter anguish of nature which is the principle that produces bones and all corporification." So here the master, it appears, tells the fortunate chela, that in the spiritual and mental world, anxiety, harsh and bitter, raises a veil before us and prevents us from using our memory. He refers, it would seem, to the other memory above the ordinary. The correctness and value of what was said in this, must be admitted when we reflect that, after all, the whole process of development is the process of *getting back the memory of the past*. And that too is the teaching found in pure Buddhism as well also as in its corrupted form.—[Ed.]

for my ideas about the place. All I could say, was, that although it seemed to be solid, I was thinking that perhaps it might be hollow.

"'Yes,' said he, 'it is hollow. It is one of the places once made by Yogees to go into deep trance in. If used by a chela (a disciple) his teacher kept watch over it so that no one might intrude. But when an adept wants to use it for laying his body away in while he travels about in his real, though perhaps to some unseen, form, other means of protection were often taken which were just as secure as the presence of the teacher of the disciple.' 'Well,' I said, 'it must be that just now no one's body is inside there.'

"'Do not reach that conclusion nor the other either. It may be occupied and it may not.'

"Then we journeyed on, while he told me of the benevolence of not only Brahmin Yogees, but also of Buddhist. No differences can be observed by the true disciple in any other disciple who is perhaps of a different faith. All pursue truth. Roads differ but the goal of all remains alike."

* * * "Repeated three times: 'Time ripens and dissolves all beings in the great self, but he who knows into what time itself is dissolved, he is the knower of the Veda.'

"What is to be understood, not only by this, but also by its being three times repeated?

"There were three shrines there. Over the door was a picture which I saw a moment, and which for a moment seemed to blaze out with light like fire. Fixed upon my mind its outlines grew, then disappeared, when I had passed the threshold. Inside, again its image came before my eyes. Seeming to allure me, it faded out, and then again returned. It remained impressed upon me, seemed imbued with life and intention to present itself for my own criticism. When I began to analyze it, it would fade, and then when I was fearful of not doing my duty or of being disrespectful to those beings, it returned as if to demand attention. Its description:

"A human heart that has at its centre a small spark—the spark expands and the heart disappears—while a deep pulsation seems to pass through me. At once identity is confused, I grasp at myself; and again the heart reappears with the spark increased to a large fiery space. Once more that deep movement; then sounds (7); they fade. All this in a picture? Yes! for in that picture there is life; there might be intelligence. It is similar to that picture I saw in Tibet on my first journey, where the living moon rises and passes across the view. Where was I? No, not afterwards! It was in the hall. Again that all pervading sound. It seems to bear me like a river. Then it ceased,—a soundless sound. Then once more the picture;

here is Pranava[1]. But between the heart and the Pranava is a mighty bow with arrows ready, and tightly strung for use. Next is a shrine, with the Pranava over it, shut fast, no key and no keyhole. On its sides emblems of human passions. The door of the shrine opens and I think within I will see the truth. No! another door? a shrine again. It opens too and then another, brightly flashing is seen there. Like the heart, it makes itself one with me. Irresistable desire to approach it comes within me, and it absorbs the whole picture.

"'Break through the shrine of Brahman; use the doctrine of the teacher.'"[2]

[There is no connection here of this exhortation with any person, and very probably it is something that was said either by himself, in soliloquy, or by some voice or person to him.

I must end here, as I find great rents and spaces in the notes. He must have ceased to put down further things he saw or did in his real inner life, and you will very surely agree, that if he had progressed by that time to what the last portions would indicate, he could not set down his reflections thereon, or any memorandum of facts. We, however, can never tell what was his reason. He might have been told not to do so, or might have lacked the opportunity.

There was much all through these pages that related to his daily family life, not interesting to you; records of conversations; wordly affairs; items of money and regarding appointments, journeys and meetings with friends. But they show of course that he was all this time living through his set work with men, and often harrassed by care as well as comforted by his family and regardful of them. All of that I left out, because I supposed that while it would probably interest you, yet I was left with discretion to give only what seemed to relate to the period marked at its beginning, by his meetings with M———, and at the end by this last remarkable scene, the details of which we can only imagine. And likewise were of necessity omitted very much that is sufficiently unintelligible in its symbolism to be secure from revelation. Honestly have I tried to unlock the doors of the ciphers, for no prohibition came with their possession, but all that I could refine from its enfolding obscurity is given to you.

As he would say, let us salute each other and the last shrine of Brahman; Om, hari, Om! TRANS.]

1 The mystic syllable OM.—[ED].

2 There is some reference here apparently to the Upanishad, for they contain a teacher's directions to break through all shrines until the last one is reached.—[ED].

KARMA.

The child is the father of the man, and none the less true is it :

"My brothers! each man's life
The outcome of his former living is ;
The bygone wrongs brings forth sorrows and woes
The bygone right breeds bliss."

* * * *

"This is the doctrine of Karma."

But in what way does this bygone wrong and right affect the present life? Is the stern nemesis ever following the weary traveler, with a calm, passionless, remorseless step? Is there no escape from its relentless hand? Does the eternal law of cause and effect, unmoved by sorrow and regret, ever deal out its measure of weal and woe as the consequence of past action? The shadow of the yesterday of sin,—must it darken the life of to-day? Is Karma but another name for fate? Does the child unfold the page of the already written book of life in which each event is recorded without the possibility of escape? What is the relation of Karma to the life of the individual? Is there nothing for man to do but to weave the chequered warp and woof of each earthly existence with the stained and discolored threads of past actions? Good resolves and evil tendencies sweep with resistless tide over the nature of man and we are told :

"Whatever action he performs, whether good or bad, every thing done in a former body must necessarily be enjoyed or suffered." *Anugita*, cp III.

There is good Karma, there is bad Karma, and as the wheel of life moves on, old Karma is exhausted and again fresh Karma is accumulated.

Although at first it may appear that nothing can be more fatalistic than this doctrine, yet a little consideration will show that in reality this is not the case. Karma is twofold, hidden and manifest, Karma is the man that is, Karma is his action. True that each action is a cause from which evolves the countless ramifications of effect in time and space.

"That which ye sow ye reap." In some sphere of action the harvest will be gathered. It is necessary that the man of action should realize this truth. It is equally necessary that the manifestations of this law in the operations of Karma should be clearly apprehended.

Karma, broadly speaking may be said to be the continuance of the nature of the act, and each act contains within itself the past and future. Every defect which can be realized from an act must be implicit in the act itself or it could never come into existence. Effect is but the nature of the act and cannot exist distinct from its cause. Karma only produces the manifestation of that which already exists; being action it has its operation in time, and Karma may therefore be said to be the same action from another

point of time. It must, moreover, be evident that not only is there a relation between the cause and the effect, but there must also be a relation between the cause and the individual who experiences the effect. If it were otherwise, any man would reap the effect of the actions of any other man. We may sometimes appear to reap the effects of the action of others, but this is only apparent. In point of fact it is our own action

" * * None else compels
None other holds you that ye live and die."

It is therefore necessary in order to understand the nature of Karma and its relation to the individual to consider action in all its aspects. Every act proceeds from the mind. Beyond the mind there is no action and therefore no Karma. The basis of every act is desire. The plane of desire or egotism is itself action and the matrix of every act. This plane may be considered as non-manifest, yet having a dual manisfestation in what we call cause and effect, that is the act and its consequences. In reality, both the act and its consequences are the effect, the cause being on the plane of desire. Desire is therefore the basis of action in its first manisfestation on the physical plane, and desire determines the continuation of the act in its karmic relation to the individual. For a man to be free from the effects of the Karma of any act he must have passed to a state no longer yielding a basis in which that act can inhere. The ripples in the water caused by the action of the stone will extend to the furthest limit of its expanse, but no further, they are bounded by the shore. Their course is ended when there is no longer a basis or suitable medium in which they can inhere ; they expend their force and are not. Karma is, therefore, as dependent upon the present personality for its fulfillment, as it was upon the former for the first initial act. An illustration may be given which will help to explain this.

A seed, say for instance mustard, will produce a mustard tree and nothing else ; but in order that it should be produced, it is necessary that the co-operation of soil and culture should be equally present. Without the seed, however much the ground may be tilled and watered, it will not bring forth the plant, but the seed is equally in-operative without the joint action of the soil and culture.

The first great result of Karmic action is the incarnation in physical life. The birth seeking entity consisting of desires and tendencies, presses forward towards incarnation. It is governed in the selection of its scene of manifestation by the law of economy. Whatever is the ruling tendency, that is to say, whatever group of affinities is strongest, those affinities will lead it to the point of manifestation at which there is the least opposition. It incarnates in those surroundings most in harmony with its Karmic tendencies and all the effects of actions contained in the Karma so manifesting will be experienced by the individual. This governs the station of life, the sex, the

conditions of the irresponsible years of childhood, the constitution with the various diseases inherent in it, and in fact all those determining forces of physical existence which are ordinarily classed under the terms, "heredity," and "national characteristics."

It is really the law of economy which is the truth underlying these terms and which explains them. Take for instance a nation with certain special characteristics. These are the plane of expansion for any entity whose greatest number of affinities are in harmony with those characteristics. The incoming entity following the law of least resistance becomes incarnated in that nation, and all Karmic effects following such characteristics will accrue to the individual. This will explain what is the meaning of such expressions as the "Karma of nations," and what is true of the nation will also apply to family and caste.

It must, however, be remembered that there are many tendencies which are not exhausted in the act of incarnation. It may happen that the Karma which caused an entity to incarnate in any particular surrounding, was only strong enough to carry it into physical existence. Being exhausted in that direction, freedom is obtained for the manifestation of other tendencies and their Karmic effects. For instance, Karmic force may cause an entity to incarnate in a humble sphere of life. He may be born as the child of poor parents. The Karma follows the entity, endures for a longer or shorter time, and becomes exhausted. From that point, the child takes a line of life totally different from his surroundings. Other affinities engendered by former action express themselves in their Karmic results. The lingering effects of the past Karma may still manifest itself in the way of obstacles and obstructions which are surmounted with varying degrees of success according to their intensity.

From the standpoint of a special creation for each entity entering the world, there is vast and unaccountable injustice. From the standpoint of Karma, the strange vicissitudes and apparent chances of life can be considered in a different light as the unerring manifestation of cause and sequence. In a family under the same conditions of poverty and ignorance, one child will be separated from the others and thrown into surroundings very dissimiliar. He may be adopted by a rich man, or through some freak of fortune receive an education giving him at once a different position. The Karma of incarnation being exhausted, other Karma asserts itself.

A very important question is here presented: Can an individual affect his own Karma, and if so to what degree and in what manner?

It has been said that Karma is the continuance of the act, and for any particular line of Karma to exert itself it is necessary that there should be the basis of the act engendering that Karma in which it can inhere and operate. But action has many planes in which it can inhere. There is the

physical plane, the body with its senses and organs; then there is the intellectual plane, memory, which binds the impressions of the senses into a consecutive whole and reason puts in orderly arrangement its storehouse of facts. Beyond the plane of intellect there is the plane of emotion, the plane of preference for one object rather than another:—the fourth principle of the man. These three, physical, intellectual, and emotional, deal entirely with objects of sense perception and may be called the great battlefield of Karma.[1] There is also the plane of ethics, the plane of discrimination of the "I ought to do this, I ought not to do that." This plane harmonizes the intellect and the emotions. All these are the planes of Karma or action what to do, and what not to do. It is the mind as the basis of desire that initiates action on the various planes, and it is only through the mind that the effects of rest and action can be received.

An entity enters incarnation with Karmic energy from past existences, that is to say the action of past lives is awaiting its development as effect. This Karmic energy presses into manifestation in harmony with the basic nature of the act. Physical Karma will manifest in the physical tendencies bringing enjoyment and suffering. The intellectual and the ethical planes are also in the same manner the result of the past Karmic tendencies and the man as he is, with his moral and intellectual faculties, is in unbroken continuity with the past.

The entity at birth has therefore a definite amount of Karmic energy. After incarnation this awaits the period in life at which fresh Karma begins. Up to the time of responsibility it is as we have seen the initial Karma only that manifests. From that time the fresh personality becomes the ruler of his own destiny. It is a great mistake to suppose that an individual is the mere puppet of the past, the helpless victim of fate. The law of Karma is not fatalism, and a little consideration will show that it is possible for an individual to affect his own Karma. If a greater amount of energy be taken up on one plane than on another this will cause the past Karma to unfold itself on that plane. For instance, one who lives entirely on the plane of sense gratification will from the plane beyond draw the energy required for the fulfillment of his desires. Let us illustrate by dividing man into upper and lower nature. By directing the mind and aspirations to the lower plane, a "fire" or centre of attraction, is set up there, and in order to feed and fatten it, the energies of the whole upper plane are drawn down and exhausted in supplying the need of energy which exists below due to the indulgence of sense gratification. On the other hand, the centre of attraction may be fixed in the upper portion, and then all the needed energy goes there to result in increase of spirituality. It must be remembered that

1. See *Bagavad-Gita* where the whole poem turns upon the conflict in this battle field, which is called the "sacred plain of *Kurukshetra*," meaning, the "body which is acquired by Karma." [Ed.]

Nature is all bountiful and withholds not her hand. The demand is made, and the supply will come. But at what cost? That energy which should have strengthened the moral nature and fulfilled the aspirations after good, is drawn to the lower desires. By degrees the higher planes are exhausted of vitality and the good and bad Karma of an entity will be absorbed on the physical plane. If on the other hand the interest is detached from the plane of sense gratification, if there is a constant effort to fix the mind on the attainment of the highest ideal, the result will be that the past Karma will find no basis in which to inhere on the physical plane. Karma will therefore be manifested only in harmony with the plane of desire. The sense energy of the physical plane will exhaust itself on a higher plane and thus become transmuted in its effects.

What are the means through which the effects of Karma can be thus changed is also clear. A person can have no attachment for a thing he does not think about, therefore the first step must be to fix the thought on the highest ideal. In this connection one remark may be made on the subject of repentance. Repentance is a form of thought in which the mind is constantly recurring to a sin. It has therefore to be avoided if one would set the mind free from sin and its Karmic results. All sin has its origin in the mind. The more the mind dwells on any course of conduct, whether with pleasure or pain, the less chance is there for it to become detached from such action. The *manas* (mind) is the knot of the heart, when that is untied from any object, in other words when the mind loses its interest in any object, there will no longer be a link between the Karma connected with that object and the individual.

It is the attitude of the mind which draws the Karmic cords tightly round the soul. It imprisons the aspirations and binds them with chains of difficulty and obstruction. It is desire that causes the past Karma to take form and shape and build the house of clay. It must be through non-attachment that the soul will burst through the walls of pain, it will be only through a change of mind that the Karmic burden will be lifted.

It will appear, therefore, that although absolutely true that action brings its own result, "there is no destruction here of actions good or not good. Coming to one body after another they become ripened in their respective ways."—Yet this ripening is the act of the individual. Free will of man asserts itself and he becomes his own saviour. To the worldly man Karma is a stern Nemesis, to the spiritual man Karma unfolds itself in harmony with his highest aspirations. He will look with tranquility alike on past and future, neither dwelling with remorse on past sin nor living in expectation of reward for present action.

SUFISM,

OR THEOSOPHY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MOHAMMEDANISM.

A Chapter from a MS. work designed as a text-book for Students in Mysticism

BY C. H. A. BJERREGAARD, *Stud. Theos.*

In Two Parts:—Part I, Texts; Part II, Symbols.

(CONTINUED.)

PART II.—SYMBOLS.

The practical expounders and preachers of Sufism are the Dervishes, the monks of Islam.

It must have become clear to our readers, that the sweet and peaceful sentiments of the couplet of Katebi, placed as motto over our first part, are the expressions of at least one side of the inner life of Sufism. But, if we listen more closely, we shall hear the plaintive note of the nightingale more distinct and perceive more readily the gloom of the cypress; both of them, like the soul of man, bewail in melancholy our disunion from Deity. That, too, is another side of Sufism, which now has been illustrated, and we have given enough quotations to show, that the highest aim of the Sufi is to attain self-annihilation by losing his humanity in Deity.

So far the direct teachings as they lie on the surface of our quotations. The grand undercurrents are the relations of The Universal Self and The Individual Self. The expression "Self" has not been used, but "God" and "Soul" because of the peculiarity of the exoteric forms of current Mohammedan Theology, which the Sufi-Doctors find themselves bound to observe.

We have yet to quote the Sufi poets Hafiz, Jami, Nizami, Attar and others, but as their teachings are veiled under symbols, they naturally find their place in this our second part, and shall be treated fully toward the end. We will begin with the more ecstatic features of practical Sufism, with the Dervishes, the Moslem saints, and thus develop the *subjective* forms of Sufism. We shall come to appreciate the use of a ritualistic service and ascetic practices, when we see these framed in close harmony with the laws of Nature and conductive to Union with Self.

Where we use the phrase The Personal, our readers will understand it as the *subjective* equivalent for the objective "Self."—

An historic study of the rise of Sufism out of original asceticism, will afford us an excellent view of the evolution of Sufism itself as well as of all other forms of Mysticism. Hence we must devote some space to it.

It must undoubtedly be maintained that asceticism and monastic life are entirely inconsistent with Mohammedanism, and in fact Mohammed himself was far from anything like it, and constantly preached against it, advocating an active life and an aggressive religion.

But neither Mohammed nor his followers could stem the tide of ascetic influences from the East, from Buddhism; nor from the West, from Christianity. These two religious systems had existed for centuries and were both characterized by monastic institutions, and missionary spirit. But, much deeper than these individual influences lies the power of a new historic cycle beginning about a century after Mohammed, just at the time we find the greatest number of Islam saints, with a distinctive monastic cast. The era is characterized by a new civilization in the West, and a consolidation of the Eastern conquests. The Mohammedan power encircles Christendom and threatens to destroy both Church and Christianity. In the East itself a terror of existence befell the minds of men and has left the strongest impressions in the writings of such men as Ata Salami and Hasan, &c.

Even in Mohammed's lifetime an attempt was made to engraft the elements of the contemplative life upon his doctrine. The facts are well known. One evening, after some more vigorous declamations than usual on the prophet's part—he had taken for his theme the flames and tortures of hell—several of his most zealous companions, among whom the names of Omar, Ali, Abou-Dharr, and Abou-Horeirah are conspicuous, retired to pass the night together in a neighbouring dwelling. Here they fell into deep discourses on the terrors of divine justice, and the means to appease or prevent its course. The conclusion they came to was nowise unnatural. They agreed that to this end the surest way was to abandon their wives, to pass their lives in continued fast and abstinence, to wear hair-cloth, and practice other similar austerities: in a word, they laid down for themselves a line of conduct truly ascetic, and leading to whatever can follow in such a course. But they desired first to secure the approbation of Mohammed. Accordingly, at break of day, they presented themselves before him, to acquaint him with the resolution of the night, as well as its motives and purport; but they had reckoned without their host. The prophet rejected their proposition with a sharp rebuke, and declared marriage and war to be far more agreeable to the Divinity than any austereness of life or mortification of the senses whatever, and the well known passage of the Quran: "O true believers, do not abstain from the good things of the earth which God permits you to enjoy," revealed on this very occasion, remains a lasting monument of Mohammed's disgust at this premature outbreak of ascetic feeling. This lesson and many others of a similar character, for the time being, checked any and all appearance of declared forms of asceticism, but could not prevent the ultimate triumph of the truer and better parts of

human nature. "Fate" would have it, that within his own family, lie hidden the germs, destined in after ages, down to the present day, and probably as long as Islam shall exist, to exert the mightiest influence in the Mohammedan world.

Ali, Mohammed's cousin, and Ali's son *Hasan*, his grandson *Zein el Abidin*, and after them *Djaufar es Sadik*, *Mousa el Kadhim*, *Ali er Ridha*, and others of their race, were members of a family which became the very backbone of asceticism. They were successively looked up to by individual ascetics as the guides and instructors in word and deed of self-denial and abnegation.

In the Menaqibu l Arafin (the Acts of the Adepts) it is related that the Prophet one day recited to Ali in private the secrets and mysteries of the "Brethren of Sincerity" enjoining him not to divulge them to any of the uninitiated, so that they should not be betrayed; also, to yield obedience to the rule of implicit submission. For forty days, Ali kept the secret in his own sole breast, and bore therewith until he was sick at heart. As his burden oppressed him and he could no more breathe freely, he fled to the open wilderness, and there chanced upon a well. He stooped, reached his head as far down into the well as he was able; and then, one by one, he confided those mysteries to the bowels of the earth. From the excess of his excitement, his mouth filled with froth and foam. There he spat out into the water of the well, until he had freed himself of the whole, and he felt relieved. After a certain number of days, a single seed was observed to be growing in that well. It waxed and shut up, until at length a youth, whose heart was miraculously enlightened on the point, became aware of this growing plant, cut it down, drilled holes in it, and began to play upon it airs, similar to those now performed by the dervish lovers of God, as he pastured his sheep in the neighbourhood. By degrees, the various tribes of Arabs of the desert heard of this flute-playing of the shepherd, and its fame spread abroad. The camels and the sheep of the whole region would gather around him as he piped, ceasing to pasture that they might listen. From all directions, the nomads flocked to hear his strains, going into ecstasies with delight, weeping for joy and pleasure, breaking forth in transports of gratification. The rumor at length reached the ears of the Prophet, who gave orders for the piper to be brought before him. When he began to play in the sacred presence, all the holy disciples of God's messenger were moved to tears and transports, bursting forth with shouts and exclamations of pure bliss, and losing all consciousness. The Prophet declared that the notes of the shepherd's flute were the inspiration of the holy mysteries he had confided in private to Ali's charge.

Thus it is that, until a man acquires the sincere devotion of the linnet-voiced flute-reed, he cannot hear the mysteries of "The Brethren of Sin-

cerity" in its dulcet notes, or realize the delights thereof; for "faith is altogether a yearning of the heart, and a gratification of the spiritual sense."

In regard to "The Brethren of Sincerity" mentioned above it can be said that the Mohammedans in the East know perfectly well that there exists on earth, among the initiated a secret hierarchy which governs the whole human race, infidels as well as believers, but that their power is often exercised in such a manner that the subjects influenced by it know not from what person or persons its effects proceed.

In this hierarchy the supreme dignity is vested in the *Khidr*. This is a man indeed, but one far elevated above ordinary human nature by his transcendent privileges. Admitted to the Divine Vision, and possessed in consequence of a relative omnipotence and omniscience on earth; visible and invisible at pleasure; freed from the bonds of space and time; by his ubiquitous and immortal powers appearing in various forms on earth to uphold the cause of truth; then concealed awhile from men; known in various ages as Seth, as Enoch, as Elias, and yet to come at the end of time as the Mahdi; this wonderful being is the centre, the prop, the ruler, the mediator of men of ascetic habits and retirement, and as such he is honoured with the name of *Kothb*, or axis, as being the spiritual pole round which and on which all move or are upheld. Under him are the *Aulia*, or intimate friends of God, seventy-two in number (some say twenty-four), holy men living on earth, who are admitted by the Kothb to his intimate familiarity, and who are to the rest the sources of all doctrine, authority, and sanctity. Among these again one, pre-eminent above the rest, is qualified by the vicarious title of *Kothb-ez-zaman*, or axis of his age, and is regarded as the visible depositary of the knowledge and power of the supreme Kothb—who is often named, for distinction's sake, *Kothb el-Akthab*, or axis of the axes—and his constant representative amongst men. But as this important election and consequent delegation of power is invisible and hidden from the greater number even of the devotees themselves, and neither the Kothb-ez-zaman nor the Aulia carry any outward or distinctive sign of dignity and authority, it can only be manifested by its effects, and thus known by degrees to the outer world, and even then rather as a conjecture than as a positive certainty.

On the authority of the famous saint of Bagdad, Aboo-Bekr el Kettanée, E. W. Lane[1] states that the orders under the rule of this chief are called *Omud* (or Owtad), *Akhyar*, *Abdal*, *Nujaba*, and *Nukaba*, naming them according to their precedence, and remarks that perhaps to these should be added an inferior order called *Ashab ed-Darak*, that is "Watchmen" or "Overseers." The Nukaba are three hundred and reside in El-Gharb

1. Arabian Soc. in the Middle Ages.—D'Ohsson describing the Turkish Dervishes gives another account.

(Northern Africa to the West of Egypt) ; the Nujaba are seventy and reside in Egypt ; the Abdal are forty and are found in Syria ; the Akhyar are seven and travel about the earth ; the Omud are four and stand in the corners of the earth. The members are not known as such to their inferior unenlightened fellow-creatures, and are often invisible to them. This is most frequently the case with the Kothb, who, though generally stationed at Mekka, on the roof of the Kaaba, is never visible there, nor at any of his other favorite stations, yet his voice is often heard at these places.

Let us add that their great power is supposed to be obtained by self-denial, implicit reliance upon God, from good genii and by the knowledge and utterance of "the most great name."

Eflaki, the historian, has given us the links of a spiritual series, through whom the mysteries of the dervish doctrines were handed down to and in the line of Jelaludin er Rumi.

Ali communicated the mysteries to the Imam Hasan of Bara, who died A. D. 728. Hasan taught them to Habib, the Persian († A. D. 724) who confided them to Dawud of the tribe Tayyi († A. D. 781) who transmitted them to Maruf of Kerkh († A. D. 818); he to Sirri († A. D. 867) and he to the great Juneyd († A. D. 909). Juneyd's spiritual pupil Shibli († A. D. 945) taught Abu-Amr Muhammed, son of Ilahim Zajjaj († A. D. 959) and his pupil was Abu-Bekr, son of Abdu-llah of Tus, who taught Abu-Ahmed Muhammed, son of Muhammed Al-Gazzali († A.D. 1111), and he committed those mysteries to Ahmed el-Khatibi, Jelal's great-grandfather, who consigned them to the Imam Sarakhsi († A. D. 1175). Sarakhsi was the spiritual teacher of Jelal's father Baha Veled, who taught the Sayyid Burhanu-d-Diu Termizi, the instructor of Jelal.—We shall now proceed with the history.

(*To be continued.*)

Please note the following correction of previous article: Footnote, page 143, August No. of the PATH, should read "Free translation by J. Freeman Clarke."

Reticence of Mahatmas and Evolution of the Individual.

Members of the Theosophical Society and the general public have alike manifested a wide divergence of opinion both as regards the fundamental aim of the Society, and its adaptation to individual cases. To get a right view of these points, it is first absolutely necessary that the Society should be considered as a whole, and to remember that like every movement in the physical or spiritual world, it must be governed by the great law of

Evolution. This is its primal Cause, and the evolution of the individual its primary work. It is not, as its history shows, an ephemeral institution, to last for a given period, like a hospital, or a society to benefit animals, or poor children, or fallen women. It is a spoke of the universal wheel of Evolution. When the world contained a body of persons sufficiently developed on the spiritual plane, they naturally formed a nucleus, from which rays presently diverged to various parts of the globe. Stimulating centres of energy which are constantly expanding through the individual efforts of their members. What is true of the whole body is true also of its component parts, and each individual, in mental capacity and psychical conditions is precisely what his previous experience, or his evolutionary ratio entitles him to be. Only by means of ever increasing effort on his own part, can he invigorate these powers.

In founding the Theosophical Society, it was hoped that the united labors of all for each and of each for all, might result in so much enlightenment and expansion of individuals as the friction of many minds, all directed to one issue, should through the correlation of moral forces afford. Hence the Society was based upon the idea of Universal Brotherhood.

There are at present two classes of persons who misinterpret this aim of the Society. The first class is variously composed of,—(*A*) those persons who suppose the Society to be solely devoted to a large phase of the subject, such as the progressive development of the entire body of the present race, or to the united interests of great masses of people, leaving the individual altogether alone in the up-hill path of his own spiritual development. (*B*) Various persons in different parts of the world who have seen fit, coincidently with giving in their adherence to the idea of Universal Brotherhood, to ridicule it as "a mere sham" or "a pure formula" or "an utopian impossibility:" the wavering incredulity of every such person arises no doubt from individual or constitutional peculiarity. (*C*) Such as suppose this basic idea to be an elastic declaration which may always be used as a shield to ward off the unpopular or chaffing accusation of an interest in Mysticism. (*D*) Those who base their denial of universal brotherhood upon the very sensible rule requiring applicants for initiation to have endorsement from active fellows of the Society. "If you make distinctions you are not universal," is the cry of these last.

All the above persons will sooner or later discover that the Society as a whole progresses through the spiritual advancement of individual members. If the individual retrogrades, the common welfare is minus so much; if he progresses, it is plus so much, and when many rise all are presently lifted as by specfic gravity, into a higher plane. For this reason not only the exoteric and much slandered founders of the Society, but also the hidden and real founders have always given much of their time and thought to in-

dividuals. At the same time they have unceasingly insisted upon the necessity for individual efforts, that each member might develop himself. This is the true meaning of Evolution. It is not the expansion of the man by means of an external force acting upon inert tissue, but an impulse from within outward and upward, enhanced by the cumulative effect of previous impulses, and further assisted by such favoring environment as his condition may permit him to assimilate.

It is in this final respect that the second class under consideration have erred. They demand greater extraneous aid for the individual. Such persons, having joined the Society and asserted their belief in the existence of Mahatmas, or Adepts, or highly advanced human beings, have after a time uttered complaints because they had no personal communications from these Great Beings, while they feel such attentions to be their due. These persons have said,—"We have declared our belief in these wise and holy Men; we have joined the Society, but we have not been favored with any proofs directly from them." Such persons require a letter under seal, projected in a phenomenal manner through the air or otherwise. Nothing short of this will satisfy them, and if they do not get it, they are likely to leave the fold of the Society, as they themselves intimate. Their complaint, in general terms, is that the Mahatmas are reticent, altogether too reticent to suit their requirements. They say that it is declared that certain other persons have received such evidence in the shape of letters, and they cite Messrs. Sinnett, Olcott, Damodar, Hume, Madame Blavatsky and several Hindus as the favored recipients. The complainants then state that their aspirations, their need, their merit, equal that of these persons, that they are, to put it roughly, "every bit as good." Some who do not say as much, think it, and a general outcry arises of,—"Why do we not get such letters as proofs? Are we not justified in ascribing undue reticence to the Mahatmas?" When in addition it is said that some others have seen the Mahatmas, or heard their voices and received gifts from them, the injured ones reiterate the complaint,—"Why are the Mahatmas so reticent? This attitude has finally become that of the press and the public at large, so that the question presents itself,—"Are the Mahatmas unduly reticent?"

The solution of this question is bound up in the subject of the "Evolution of the Individual." As regards the general evolution, the Mahatmas cannot be thus accused, for had we their knowledge of the whole, so as to be able to feel and know what all minerals, plants, animals and men feel collectively, we should see that in this department Mahatmas are never accused even in thought of withholding either knowledge, favor or blessing. The whole moves by law (which law includes the Mahatmas themselves), and as a whole recognises this law and knows no possible departure from it.

As heretofore stated, the work of the Theosophical Society lies within

the department of individual evolution, and just as its sphere may only be enlarged through the constant labors of its members, so every individual follows the same law, *will he, nil he.* The Mahatmas are not reticent. They can justly be no more than the favoring environment to the individual soul. They give to each human well just the water it can hold; to overflow it would be waste. It has been well said that the human mind, like the atmosphere, has its saturation point. To realise when we have reached this point is the first step on the path of self-knowledge: to strive to expand our boundaries by incessant study and observation, carries us leagues further on our way. Those who journey thus have neither time nor desire for complaint. We enter into this life through our parents, subject to law. From one mystery we pass, ignorant of the future, into another mystery: lessons are learned in each. So is the soul born into the higher life and becomes by degrees acquainted with its mysteries. Through each order of life runs the law of natural selection. "A man is a method, a progressive arrangement, a selecting principle," says Emerson. As the man chooses the friends and the pursuits best adapted to him, so by the law of spiritual dynamics is the soul attracted to just such food as it can assimilate, to the influences necessary to its present development. If the individual mind fails to grasp this idea and to see that we ourselves, (and not the Mahatmas,) create our own possibilities, how far less fitted is it to profit usefully by the very opportunities it demands. The gratification of curiosity, the quickening of interest in personalities or phenomena as such, are not growths of the soul, nor can they advance the evolution of the individual. The Mahatmas do not withhold us from Truth, but we ourselves. When we come to be a part of it, we shall know it: when we come to live in its laws, who can shut us away from it? The upright heart cries,—"Mine is mine, if the universe deny me, and not all the Mahatmas combined can convey to me one truth in which I am not ready to dwell. The Spirit communicates itself; the Masters but interpret the vision, as soothsayers the dreams of Kings. I am a king when the Spirit exalts me, made so by the super-royal act. I will not covet borrowed robes, nor whine as a beggar for charities, but wait until I am come into mine own estate. Then the Wise Ones will teach me how to rule it." The heart that chooses in truth this noble part, has felt already the quickening touch of the Divine. Like Jove of old, it bids the earth-bound waggoner abate his cries, and put first his own shoulder to the wheel.

Let complainants therefore reflect how ignorant they are of their own capacity to understand psychological data, and how necessary it is that they should first develop themselves in that direction. A ray of light may shoot by us unseen and unknown, to be lost in the further space, for want of the timely interposition of a reflective surface. Or it may stream directly into the eye, and even so may still be lost, should the eye lack the power to

receive the impression. Thus an attempt at direct communication or illumination may be and often is frustrated for lack of the perceptive eye and soul. Shall we expect to receive these at other hands, as by a miracle, when we know well that we never fully profit by any experience which we have not lived out for ourselves. Who amongst us has not seen a child reject with impatience the teachings of his elders, and presently return home brimful of wonder and dogmatism over the very same fact which some companion had knocked into him? The strong soul must be self delivered. Amongst our number there are indeed those who have the spiritual eye in part, and the Mahatmas, desirous to arouse it more fully, now and then project a beam of wisdom which the eye fails to receive and it passes on to those who are better fitted to absorb it. "No man can learn what he has not preparation for learning, however near to his eye is the object. A chemist may tell his most precious secrets to a carpenter, and he shall never be the wiser,--the secret he would not utter to a chemist for an estate. God screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened; then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream."[1]

Let us then press forward to this harvest time, neither asking for help, nor doubting that it is at hand though unseen, and remembering above all that what we consider reticence, or silence on the part of the Mahatmas, is often but a higher order of speech which we do not as yet understand, and to whose golden accents untiring endeavor alone can give the key.

JULIUS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HARTFORD, Aug., 1886.

TO THE PATH,

DEAR FRIEND:—I like the PATH much. I have noted many articles that I am anxious to get time to read at my leisure. They are full of the meat that satisfieth the soul. How this on-coming wave from esoteric and mystic sources has rushed upon us within the past few years! 'Tis a veritable ground-swell, and it seems to stretch out to all shores, and its sources are from Infinity itself. Surely, that that we need, does come to us at the right time. The demands of the soul imply that the requisite supply is somewhere in existence. The glass of sparkling cold water tendered by Emerson to Frederika Bremer at the crystal spring at which they halted by the road-side, is symbolic of the wants of the spiritual nature. Her comments upon it, are in the line of thought I have touched upon:

1 Emerson.

"A glass of water! How much may be comprised in this gift! Why this should become significant to me on this occasion, I cannot say; but so it was. I have silently within myself combated with Emerson from the first time that I became acquainted with him. I have questioned in what consisted this power of the spirit over me, while I so much disapproved of his mode of thinking. In what consisted his mysterious, magical power,—that invigorating, refreshing influence which I always experience in his writings, or in intercourse with him? This cordial draught of clear water from the spring, given by his hand, I understood it. It is precisely this crystal, pure, fresh cold water in his individual character, in his writings, which has refreshed, and will again and yet again refresh me. I have opposed Emerson in thought with myself. * * * But in long years to come, and when I am far from here in my own native land, and when I am old and gray,—yes, always, always will moments recur when I shall yearn toward Waldo Emerson, and long to receive from his hand that draught of fresh water."

Emerson drew from invisible sources, and Miss Bremer's fine tribute is all the stronger because it comes in spite of orthodox prejudice. But I have turned off into an unexpected "path," and my time is up, and I must end abruptly, as usual. Yours fraternally,

F. E.

MARSEILLES, Aug., 1886.

EDITOR OF THE PATH,

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your valuable magazine.

I cannot but admire the great abilities and learning of its contributors, and I trust and hope that a complete success will repay you for your endeavors after the improvement of our poor and misguided humanity, and the glorification of the Truth. Yours fraternally,

BARON J. SPEDALIERI, F. T. S.

REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE OPTIMISM OF EMERSON.—By Wm. F. Dana. (*Cupples, Upham & Co., Boston, 1886.*) Price 50 c. cloth. For sale by Brentano, Union Square, New York.

The author seeks to account for the optimism of Emerson by his "cheerful disposition," and for his influence in literature by the action of that cheerfulness upon "an age of intellectual gloom" due to "England, France, Germany and Italy, having taken a despairing view of life." The

cause of nineteenth century pessimism Mr. Dana sums up thus: "The root of our difficulties is the fact that we have lost faith in a revealed religion. We do not believe the Bible to be an inspired book, hence, we have to form a religion by ourselves out of the material within us and about us. It has seemed impossible to us, unless we abandoned our reason, to believe, that what appear to us *good and evil* could be *all good.*" Mr. Dana, though evidently a sincere admirer of Emerson, confesses that he gave the world no new revelation, either in religion or philosophy, and he compares his influence to the moonlight, rather than the sunlight. But if Emerson left the mystery of life unsolved, he influenced men's emotional nature for good by reason of the cheerful, hopeful tone of his own mind, which, by setting up sympathetic vibrations in the hearts of others, gave them a renewed assurance that "the sun is shining behind the clouds," and that apparent evil is but real good in disguise.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.—A series of articles on the "Philosophy of Religion from the Standpoint of the Mystics," prepared by C. H. A. Bjerregaard of the Astor Library, will be published forthwith, in the *Religio Philosophical Journal.*

THE SONG CELESTIAL OR BAGAVAD-GITA, tr. from the Sanscrit by Edwin Arnold, M. A. (*Roberts Brothers, Boston.*) Cloth $1.00. This is a poetical rendering by a master hand, of the greatest of books, and by many will be more easily understood than the present extant prose editions of Wilkins, Thomson, and others. But its power and beauty depend upon the inherent qualities of the poem, and an indifferent hand at the work could not spoil it: how much more it will be for its readers, under the touch of Mr. Arnold, is easy to see, for he is a scholar, a philosopher, and a true singer. So much exoterically.

But this is in every sense an esoteric poem, and as usual, an interpreter who knows nothing of the secret doctrine, has not succeeded in opening the lock of this great treasure box. Following all his predecessors, Mr. Arnold opens with the old old error of ranging the people of King Dhritirashtra upon the plain of Kurukshetra in battle with the Pandavas, and utterly fails to translate this name of a plain. Here is the key. This plain is the human body and is *not* a field in the centre of India; and the king himself is material existence possessing a *thirst* for life. Proceeding with the details of the generals and chiefs engaged, our poet simply gives their names untranslated, whereas each name is a power, quality or manifestation of the mental or spiritual man. Bhishma and Bhima of all, are untouched.

Ignorance as to the use and intention of these names is due very much to the indifference of the Hindus who, while knowing well the errors committed, have not raised a finger.

Mr. Arnold's translation is very beautiful and inspiring, and is to our knowledge, in the hands of many Theosophists.

THE SECRET OF DEATH, from the Sanscrit, and other poems, by Edwin Arnold, M. A. (*Roberts Brothers, Boston.*) Cloth $1.00. 45 pages are taken up by the "Secret of Death," and scattered through the 252 pages are, here and there, other short pieces from Sanscrit. The first poem is a practical rendering of the episode in the Katha Upanishad where Nachiketas is devoted to Yama, the god of death, and learns high knowledge from him. The other Indian songs are : Rajah's Ride, Bihari Mill song, Funeral song, Serpent Charmer's song, Flour Mill song and a short discourse of Buddha held at Rajagriha, cast in the same mould as "The Light of Asia."

INDIA REVISITED—By Edwin Arnold, M. A. C. S. I. (*Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1886.*) Cloth $2.00, illustrated. This is Mr. Arnold's account of his revisiting India after the lapse of some years. In prose he is as clear as he is enchanting in poetry. The illustrations are from photographs and lend a charm to the book. The reader's interest is held to the last chapter ; and fair justice is done to "his India," which is not generally the method pursued by Englishmen who detail their travels in the mysterious land. On returning, his adieu declares that lakhs of true friends are left there among Hindus, and his heart roves from hut to hut, whispering "he knows and loves."

DOGMA AND RITUAL OF HIGH MAGISM.—By Eliphas Lévi, translated by a fellow of the Theosophical Society, is now in hand for publication as soon as may be convenient. It will be issued in two volumes, about 600 pages, and put at as low a price as possible, $5.00. THE PATH has taken charge of the issuing of the book, and will receive subscriptions for it. All the illustrations in the French edition will be reproduced.

A FALLEN IDOL.—By F. Anstey. This is a novel devoted to a plot in which *Theosophy, Chelas, astral bodies, currents,* and what not, figure on every page. It tells of the power and wanderings, the evil deeds and influence of a strong bad man's shell, attached to an eastern idol. There is a German *Chela* included, and also a fraudulent message.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHICAL COUNCIL.—In the July *Theosophist,* it was announced that the General Council had resolved to organize the American Branches upon a better and more permanent basis, than previously existed, and that instructions to postpone the Board of Control meeting had been sent.

The formal orders have arrived, and are in brief, that all the Branches here are to be formed into the American Council, which is to be the Western Section of the General Council, but subordinate to it, whereupon the Board of Control goes out of existence; all Branch presidents and the present members of the Board of Control are to be *ex-officio* members of this Council which the orders direct to be formed on call of the Board of Control as soon as possible after receipt of advices. Other members of the Council, to be selected from the whole body of American Theosophists, may be elected, and the Council is to meet in time to forward reports to the regular Council at Adyar in December.

This action is eminently wise, as the term *Board of Control* was misleading, inasmuch as the very foundation of the Society is democratic in its nature, and *control* savored to much of form, ceremonies, discipline, officers, secret reports and all the paraphernalia of an established church.

In all other respects the routine is unchanged by the orders. With 14 Branches and others contemplated, these great United States ought to stand in fair way of being soon theosophized.

MALDEN.—Members are working and studying. They enjoy advantages in having a few who thoroughly understand the subject.

NEW YORK.—The ARYAN THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY meets regularly. Not many open meetings have occurred in August or July, but frequent private ones have been held, and the members are deeply in earnest. The library has received several additions, and the books are regularly used by members.

RUMORS—are afloat that some very learned and distinguished theosophists from abroad will be here in the fall. If so—and we think our information is reliable—the whole host of newspapers, critics, and Conways, may expect to hear a few more final "last words on Theosophy." Gentlemen of the opposition! the cycle runs its course, the terrible wheel of Karma turns round resistlessly, and you cannot stop it, astonishing as may seem to you to be the senility of people in running after Theosophy.

ROSICRUCIANS.—The Society of the R. C. is being revived in Germany it is said, and theosophists are in it. Next month we will give a resumé of some of their ideas.

"A knot of ignorance binds all men's hearts; this, action looses and God's grace imparts."—*Hindi verse.*

"Study all Scriptures written, near or far;
Worship all images and saints of earth; But if you do not study who you are, All your best actions are nothing worth."—*Sanscrit verse.*

OM!